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PROGRESS OF THE WORLD

One of the earliest important acts of President Harding's Administration was marked with a commendable and auspicious exercise of "team work" on the part of members of the Cabinet. The request of the Soviet dictators for resumption of commercial relations between America and Russia was first and quite logically considered by the Secretary of Commerce, who gave the scheme no encouragement on the ground that there was already freedom of trade between the two countries, that actual trade was impossible with a country which had nothing to sell and nothing with which to buy, and that the Soviet desire was really for political recognition. Critics of the Administration, mindful of the cross-purposes and antagonism that had prevailed between members of the preceding Cabinet and assuming that this one would do no better, were quick to exclaim that such judgment of the Secretary of Commerce would probably be overruled by the Secretary of State. But a day or two later Mr. Hughes, regarding the subject from the political and diplomatic point of view, reached precisely the same conclusion that Mr. Hoover had reached from the commercial point of view, and definitively rejected the Bolshevist overtures in one of the strongest and most impressive short notes ever issued from the State Department. There was in Mr. Hughes's note no word of unkindness toward the Russian people, nor even of resentment at the almost incredible impertinence of the Soviet message, which had practically suggested that as the late Democratic Administration had been unfriendly to Bolshevism, the new Republican Administration ought to cultivate its friendship. Such is the Soviet conception of diplomatic decency. President Harding's Administration is of course true to the best principles and traditions not only of American but of all enlightened diplomacy in keeping our foreign relations entirely apart from domestic partisanship, and in consistently maintaining the policy of its predecessor wherever—as

conspicuously in this case—it was absolutely right and just. This episode was preceded by what purported to be a renunciation of Bolshevik propaganda by Nicolai Lenine and an acceptance by him of the bourgeoisie and capitalism as necessities of civilization; which was generally estimated to be nothing but a Bolshevik counsel of despair—the monkish pretences of a very sick Devil. Subsequent developments are cumulatively confirming that judgment.

An admirable beginning was made in dealings with our Southern neighbors in the prompt and decisive intervention of the Administration in the dispute between Costa Rica and Panama. Instead of abiding by an arbitral decision given years ago, those States began fighting over their undetermined boundary. An authoritative word from our Government was sufficient to stop hostilities, and Secretary Hughes's masterful exposition of the whole case convinced Costa Rica of the necessity, for honor's sake, of accepting the arbitral award as binding. Panama, unhappily, was less ready to do so, and President Porras took the extraordinary step of appealing to President Harding against the Secretary of State—just as though the latter's action had not of course been approved by the President before it was taken. President Harding's reply was a courteous and kindly but quite inflexible confirmation of Mr. Hughes's note. The argument of President Porras, that the arbitral award should be nullified because the Panaman Government did not like it, did not appeal to the Administration of a country which regards such awards as essentially binding upon winner and loser alike, and which on several notable occasions has without demur paid heavy judgments which arbitrators have levied against it.

Secretary Hughes's masterful note on Germany's responsibility for the war and her obligation to make indemnification for its losses serves two major purposes. It disposes effectively of the prolix camouflage with which the Berlin Government impertinently and disingenuously strove to persuade our Government that Germany was more sinned against than sinning, and it makes it unmistakably clear that in its attitude toward Germany,

and its insistence upon holding her to account for the war, the United States stands with the Allies just as completely and as steadfastly as it did at Belleau Wood and in the Argonne. That Germany would persist, to a certain point, in dishonest attempts to evade her responsibilities under the Treaty of Versailles, was to be expected, though the insolence of some of her pretences and excuses is exceptionally brazen, even for her. In response to the notice that she would be expected to pay on or before May 1 something like eleven or twelve billion marks in gold, that being the unpaid remainder of the twenty billions which she was to pay, she said in effect that she did not owe such a sum, that if she did owe it she was unable to pay it, and that if she was able to pay it, she would not do so. Happily, the Allies are at last agreed that forbearance with a contumacious welcher ceases to be a virtue, and are prepared to take whatever measures of military or other force may be necessary to bring her to terms. The result of the plebiscite in Upper Silesia, for all her desperate and unscrupulous efforts in it, gives Germany little comfort. Some parts of the country, notably industrial centres, voted strongly to remain German. Other parts, notably some of the richest mining regions, voted as strongly to return to their ancient Polish allegiance. The gross verdict of the whole country appears to have been in favor of Germany. In advance of the polling, apprehending a total vote in favor of Poland, Germany vociferously demanded that self-determination should be accorded to the people by provinces and even by communes, so that if the country as a whole voted Polish, those parts of it which voted German might remain with the latter country. Such disposition of it was decided upon by the Reparations Commission, not because Germany wanted it but because it seemed right and just. But the moment it appeared that the country as a whole had voted German, a still more vociferous demand was made by Germany that there should be no partitioning according to local preferences, but that the whole country should be awarded to her. The Reparations Commission naturally stood by its former decision, and Upper Silesia will be apportioned between Poland and Germany as the Allies deem just and right.

Mr. Hays begins his administration of the Post-Office Department in a highly gratifying manner. In its treatment of its three hundred thousand employees, the department is to be made human. In its service to its hundred million patrons, it is to be made efficient. Also, it is to be freed from politics; post-masters are to be appointed who will be, so far as possible, *persona grata* to their local constituents, and are to be encouraged and indeed expected to participate actively in the civic and social activities of their communities; and the civil service merit system is to be established upon a basis so comprehensive and so impregnable that nobody will hereafter venture to assail it. These, be it observed, are the very specific promises not of a candidate in advance of election, but of a man actually in office and therefore to be held strictly to their fulfilment. That they will be fulfilled, as far as it is within human power to do it, nobody who knows Mr. Hays will for a moment doubt. It is interesting to note that in addition to these promises for his department, he makes a suggestion, or a request, to the public, beginning with his own colleagues in the Cabinet, that matter for mailing shall be delivered to the post-offices as promptly as possible during the day, instead of holding it so as to dump it all together into the post-offices at the end of the day. Such a reform in mailing would greatly relieve the pressure of work in the post-offices, and would serve the interest of the public by securing earlier transmission and delivery of mail. Coöperation between the public and the department will thus be for the advantage of both.

The death of Cardinal Gibbons removed from the Roman Catholic Church in America a man of whom without invidiousness it may confidently be said that he never was surpassed among its prelates in the respect, confidence, admiration and affection in which he was held not alone by the millions of his own vast communion but also by the nation at large without regard to creed, party or race. It removed from the ranks of American citizenry, too, a patriot of most sterling worth, who did probably more than any other man that ever lived to Americanize, aggressively and effectively, a spiritual constituency comprising an exceptionally large proportion of members of alien

origin. Those who can personally recall, with the profound gratitude which they must feel, the priceless services of Archbishop Hughes in the Civil War, can estimate the value of such services in a far greater war and also through many years of peace, multiplied many times through the longer career and the more authoritative rank of the great Cardinal.

The King of the Hellenes, having been restored to his throne, apparently seeks to confirm his possession of it by rousing the patriotic fervor of his people in a war against the hated Tribe of Othman. Incidentally, he presumably wishes to show them that in dismissing Mr. Venizelos they did not forfeit all the territorial and other advantages which that statesman had secured for them. The enterprise savors much of a private war. At any rate it is one which Greece alone is waging, not only without the aid but also without the moral support, the sympathy or the sanction of the Allies. Its only possible vindication, therefore, must be in victory. The Powers are not likely to intervene in behalf of the Turks, though of course they would not countenance Greek invasion of any Turkish territory of which they have already made definite disposal. What would happen if Constantine should venture too far, and should suffer defeat and disaster at the hands of the Turks, is another and an interesting question. The Powers could scarcely afford to have the Turks too greatly triumph over Greece. But their intervention in behalf of Greece would be likely to involve an unpleasant quarter of an hour for King Constantine.

That is a singularly felicitous enterprise of numerous British towns and cities, to "adopt" for rebuilding and restoration French and Belgian towns and cities which were desolated by the war. Thus we are told that the City and County of London has undertaken to rebuild Verdun, Newcastle will restore Arras—so far as the unrestorable can be restored—and Manchester will raise Mezieres from dust and ashes to new life. It is one of the most practical of undertakings. It is also one of the most generous and most auspicious ever conceived, for it will knit together as perhaps nothing else in the world could do the affec-

tions of the two countries, the two peoples. Hereafter whenever Frenchmen speak or hear or think of the British capital, they will think of the rebuilder and restorer of Verdun, and as long as the heroism of the one is remembered with pride, the bounty of the other will be remembered with gratitude.

The twentieth anniversary of the organization of the United States Steel Corporation, the largest industrial concern in the world, provokes some interesting and not unprofitable reflections upon "big business." Down to twenty years ago "big business" meant that which was measured by millions of dollars, sometimes by tens of millions, and in a few cases, spoken of with awe, hundreds of millions. This was the first concern in history to be capitalized at a billion dollars. There were those who thought it too big to be practicable. But it has demonstrated the error of such apprehensions; being no more unwieldly or inclined to disintegration than any smaller corporation. In the twenty years of its existence it has paid out in dividends somewhat more than the amount of its entire capital, while the volume of its business in its twentieth year was equal to more than one and three-quarters times its capital. The amount which its activities have added, directly and indirectly, to the wealth of the nation and of the world, is scarcely to be estimated. As for friction and controversies between the managers and employees, they have been somewhat less than in many smaller corporations. The net conclusion seems to be that "big business" is not in the simple fact of its bigness necessarily evil, but may be conducted as honestly, as fairly and as liberally as even the smallest enterprise.